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Speaking as Greeks, speaking over Greeks: Orality and its problems in Roman translation

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This article explores the cultural and social background of oral and textual translation in Rome to discuss the profound effects that oral forms of translation, along with oral performance, had on ancient Roman translation. It examines the significance of speaking and writing “proper” Greek among the Roman elite, the anxieties that provoked in Rome, and the reasons why Roman texts elide the help of Greeks in their translations, even though the lack of dictionaries and other aids meant that their help was necessary. It also discusses the role of orality in Cicero’s translations and, in particular, in his *On the Best Type of Orator*, and in Pliny the Younger’s and Catullus’ writings on translation.

Keywords: orality; history of interpreting; oral translation; Roman translation; history of translation; Cicero; Catullus; Pliny the Younger

Frequently, scholars approach oral translation as if it worked in the same ways that literary or textual translations do, or treat it as a poor cousin to literary translation (Cronin 2002). Here, for all I will talk about literary as well as oral translation practices in Ancient Rome, I do not wish to commit that error. However, as both oral and literary translation are embedded practices which take place in social environments and are affected by the habitus of a translator or interpreter,¹ it is necessary to examine and understand the particular circumstances of oral translation in a cultural system, and the case of Rome is not an exception to this rule. In this article I will use an examination of the cultural and social background of oral and textual translation in Rome to discuss the profound effects that oral forms of translation, along with oral performance, had on Roman translation, and how their impact may explain the forms it took (and, in one famous case, may explain Cicero’s abandonment of a translation).

That said, it must be admitted that in dealing with antiquity we face the problem that oral translation was not a well-documented procedure and any picture we have of interpreters and interpreting (to take only one example of oral translation) is necessarily very fragmentary. It is also dominated by elite discourse, which frequently elides the presence of oral translation. Although, for example, we know that a great deal of interpreting must have happened in Roman courts and for the benefit of provincials who had to deal with the Roman administration and army,² we have little evidence of how it was practised, any norms it may have adhered to, or its practitioners. There is, as a result, a temptation to dismiss oral translation in Rome

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as unimportant in the role it played in shaping other translation practices, or to mark it as one of the many topics that, barring any further information being uncovered, we cannot discuss in any great detail.

Orality in Roman culture

However, Ancient Rome was very much a literate culture; it was also a profoundly oral one at the same time.³ Those who created literary translations were deeply integrated into a cultural system where oral performance, especially in the courts and Senate, was also key to political, economic and literary success. Authors were expected to perform their works to friends and larger audiences as they were writing them and as part of their publication process. Let me stress, however, that I am not arguing that Roman texts were, for example, transmitted in the same manner as oral poetry in archaic Greece was or that Rome was an oral culture. Rather, I am stating that orality was an important component in literary production, even if only in terms of the language and the gestures that an author might make towards his audience⁴ (even in the genre of oratory an initial first performance was often followed by the publication of a written text that might sometimes have little to do with the original version).⁵ Translation and translating were part of this cultural environment: translating into and out of the right Greek and Greek texts *and* speaking the right sort of Greek were part of proving one belonged to the Roman elite.⁶ Conversely, speaking the wrong sort of Greek, not speaking Greek or using it inappropriately marked you as the wrong sort of Roman (see below).

Orality and literary translation in Cicero and other Roman authors

The marks of orality can be found in a number of translations and texts on translation, but here I will focus on the Roman orator Cicero's *On the Best Type of Orator* (44 BCE), a text familiar to translation studies. This, a preface to a planned translation of two opposing Greek speeches of the fourth century BCE, Demosthenes' *On the Crown* and Aeschines' *Against Ctesiphon*, is best known for Cicero's comment "that he translated as an orator, not as an interpreter" (14). Less frequently cited is the final line of the preface, which introduces the translations. In this line Cicero announces to his audience: "but enough of me; now let us hear Aeschines himself (*ipsum*) speaking Latin".⁷ It was extremely rare that Cicero said enough of himself: he clearly felt that hearing Cicero and about Cicero was a very good thing, and the more you got of him on a regular basis, the better.⁸ However, it is not the unusual nature of this statement for Cicero that interests me, but how it highlights the intersection of the literate and the oral in Roman translation. Cicero's audience is not told to *read* Aeschines, but to *listen* to him *speaking* to them *in person*. The Latin grammar is very emphatic about this: this is Aeschines *ipsum*, himself, that Cicero's listeners will hear. The last word of the preface is *audiamus* – let us hear – a word that unites both the translator and his audience as listeners to the translated Greek orator, rather than marking Cicero out as the person who will be animating the voice of a Latinized Aeschines.

We are used to the invisible translator who elides themselves out of their text or performance; the Romans, however, were not.⁹ Speaking *as* a Greek when one was a member of the Roman elite in the Late Republic was an act that carried considerable

risks; speaking *over* Greeks, on the other hand, whether one did that through translation or some other means, was acceptable. (There were many Romans who thought the more you spoke over Greeks the better.) To understand why this is the case, I will examine the role of Greek and Greeks in Roman elite culture and translation before moving on to the issue of oral performance and the consequences of all these elements for Roman translation practices.

The Role of Greek and Greeks in Roman elite culture

Over the course of the third century BCE the Roman elite began a process of Hellenization that picked up speed and intensity as the centuries progressed and never vanished as a critical element in Roman aristocratic education (see e.g. MacMullen 1991). Speaking Greek, reading Greek, and knowing Greek literature – especially genres such as oratory and history – became a critical way to express elite status.¹⁰ This did not occur without some pushback and there were attempts to restrict the influence of Greek culture, especially when it came into conflict with traditional modes of training and acculturating elite men. Cato the Elder (234–149 BCE) advised his son that

I will tell you at the right point what I dug up on those Greeks in Athens, Marcus, my son: it is a good thing to browse their literature, not learn it off by heart. I will win my case that they are a worthless and unteachable people. Consider me a prophet in the following: as soon as that tribe hands over its literature, it will corrupt everything. (Cato, *To his son Marcus*, Fragment 1)

As a mark of his privileging of Latin over Greek, Cato the Elder used an interpreter when he spoke to the Athenian Assembly while a military tribune, supposedly causing the Athenians to admire the brevity of Latin when compared to Greek (Plutarch, *Cato the Elder* 12). The following comment by the imperial historian Valerius Maximus shows that issues about speaking Greek and when it was appropriate for Romans to do so lived on in the reign of Tiberius (14–37 CE):

Long ago our magistrates acted to maintain the greatness of the Roman people; we can see this in how – along with other examples of how they preserved their dignified status – they guarded with great diligence the tradition of never giving responses (*responsa*)¹¹ to the Greeks in anything other than Latin. In fact, they even forced the Greeks to speak through interpreters not just in Rome, but even in Greece and Asia [Minor], stripping them of those smooth tongues through which they get their power. This certainly spread an increased sense of the dignity of the sound of Latin through all peoples. These magistrates were learned [i.e. in Greek], but they thought that the toga should not be subject to the *pallium*¹² in any area, and judged it was inappropriate that the importance and commands of empire should be handed over to the sweet nothings of literature.¹³

Although this passage is problematic,¹⁴ we know from elsewhere that the Romans kept controls on the use of Greek in the Senate, including using interpreters to prevent Greeks from speaking directly to the Senate in formal situations.¹⁵

The Romans used Greek interpreters while representing Rome in an official capacity and avoided speaking the language in particularly fraught situations. The Roman general Scipio Africanus the Elder used an interpreter when speaking to the

Carthaginian general Hannibal before the battle of Zama in 202 BCE (Polybius 15.6, Livy, *From the Founding of Rome* 30.30). Although both were fluent in Greek, and Hannibal understood and spoke Latin (although with a strong accent), the presence of an interpreter marked their identities as generals leading armies of two powerful, non-Hellenistic states. The general Aemilius Paullus, who was also fluent in Greek, had his praetor¹⁶ Gnaeus Octavius interpret for him when speaking to the defeated Greek army after his victory at the battle of Pydna in 168 BCE (Livy 45.29.1–3). Paullus spoke Greek to the Greek king while they were in Paullus' tent, but wasn't willing to speak it to him or the other Greek captives in public, and especially not before his victorious army.

At the same time, speaking and reading Greek was part and parcel of elite life and identity, and Romans embraced the language enthusiastically: the senator Fabius Pictor wrote the first history of Rome in Greek and the praetor Albucius was satirized by the poet Gaius Lucilius (c. 180–102/1 BCE) because he greeted everyone he encountered in Greek (Cicero, *On Moral Ends* 1.3). Lucilius himself mixed a great deal of Greek into his Latin poetry, and the poet Horace commented that “he achieved (*fecit*)¹⁷ much because he mixed Greek with Latin words” (*Satires* 1.10.20). Romans eagerly imported Greek scholars to Rome and flooded to Athens to perfect their Greek and study philosophy and rhetoric.¹⁸ And, despite his railing against the Greeks and their corrupting literature, Cato the Elder kept a Greek tutor in his own household to teach his children, so he was also aware of the need for Romans of his class to know the language and know it well.

When talking about elite ability in Greek we are *not* talking about an ability to throw out a few Greek phrases here and there; the ideal was to be fluent in Greek at a very high level. Cicero's command of Greek was apparently so perfect that it reduced Molon, his teacher of rhetoric in Rhodes, to tears because he was better than the Greeks even in Greek oratory (Plutarch, *Life of Cicero* 4.6–7).¹⁹ Cicero was exceptional, but he represented a standard to which young, elite Romans were meant to aspire. However, even Cicero used interpreters when acting as a governor in Cilicia and his inappropriate speaking of Greek could cause him trouble, as when he was attacked for speaking Greek when he addressed the Syracusan Assembly in Sicily (Cicero, *Against Verres* 2.4.147). He also avoided Greek when speaking to the Roman Senate and people (Wallace-Hadrill 2011, 84), knowing it would send the wrong signals to his audience.

It is clear from the above that the situation in Rome regarding Greek was extremely complicated. While it became a building block of Roman elite identity and Greeks were imported as slaves, teachers and authors (sometimes these were one and the same) and found enthusiastic audiences in Rome,²⁰ it had to be treated with care. There were rules about when and where it was acceptable to speak it and how to use it in Roman literature – and breaking those rules had political and personal consequences, as in the case of Cicero cited previously. Elite Romans also spoke and read a very particular form of Greek: Attic Greek, the dialect of Attica and Athens, although Greeks of this period spoke *koiné*. Romans also learned a version of Attic that was not in current use, as much of their education involved reading and studying authors from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, such as Demosthenes, Aeschines, Thucydides and Plato. We might compare learning to speak and read English from eighteenth- or nineteenth-century English: you would most likely be understood by many English speakers, but your speech would be

marked as different to that of native speakers – which was probably the point for elite Romans.²¹

Greeks, their help in translation, and their elision in Roman texts

The situation was further complicated by the nature of ancient texts and the performative nature of Roman literary culture. First, ancient texts. These were not easy to negotiate; not only were they unwieldy because they were in scrolls and the Romans did not have writing desks, but, because words were not separated, letters were all the same height; there were no section headings, indexes, or, usually, tables of contents (see further Small [1997] on the nature of ancient texts and its effects on reading; on their effect on translation, see McElduff [2013, 7–8]). There were, even more importantly, no Greek-Latin dictionaries, with the exception perhaps of some technical ones (Horsfall 1979). This meant that when Romans sat down with a Greek text they usually needed some assistance, and that was particularly true for texts that used dialects other than Attic. In this situation the easiest thing was to turn to a Greek for help with specific language issues and with unfamiliar texts: translation was thus a collaborative process even for those whose Greek was excellent. Middlemen – Greek middlemen – were essential to help Roman readers through unfamiliar texts and dialects, and most translations surely involved some considerable amount of discussion and aid. However, these figures are *always* erased from published discussions of translation, even though we know they were used. In fact, our few mentions of the assistance of Greeks in Roman translation come from informal sources such as Cicero's letters, late asides or the Greeks themselves.

For example, a late, fifth-century CE source (Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 5.17.18) tells us that Virgil used the Greek poet Parthenius as a *grammaticus* to help him with Greek. Besides aiding Virgil with his Greek, Parthenius also produced the *Erotica Pathemata*, a sequence of prose stories in Greek about mythical figures suffering in exotic and improbable ways because of love, a work produced after he was brought to Rome as a slave in the late 70s or early 60s BCE. In his preface to the *Erotica Pathemata* he offered it to the Roman poet and politician Cornelius Gallus as a work that would be of use to both Gallus and himself. Greeks like Parthenius were vital in aiding Romans in their study of Greek and Greek literature, not just in Cicero's age (the Late Republic) but in all periods of Roman history, but, as I said above, are continually erased from our texts. Although we have little remaining from Gallus' poetry, I doubt that even if we had more, we would even find a hint of an acknowledgement of Parthenius' aid. We know from Cicero's letters that he had Greeks draw up epitomes of Greek texts from which he would work, which may help explain the phenomenal rate of his production of Latin versions of Greek philosophical thought,²² but when he writes about translating he talks about Romans facing down and dominating Greek texts on their own. (A good example of this can be found at *On the Orator* 1.154–55, where the orator Crassus represents his translation from Greek into Latin as a solitary activity pursued to improve his ability in Latin.)

This erasure is not unique to Cicero, but also appears in his contemporary, the lyric poet Catullus. In poem 50, which is most likely a preface to the following poem in the collection (poem 51), a translation of a poem of the Greek poetess Sappho,²³

Catullus talks of tossing poetry backwards and forwards with another member of the elite, Licinius Calvus:

Yesterday, Licinius, we were at leisure and played a great deal on my writing tablets, as it suited us to be decadent. We both played, writing dainty little verse, now in one meter, now in another, returning like for like amongst the jokes and wine. I left so fired up by your charm and wit that even food did not aid me (poor me!), nor did sleep cover my eyes, but raging with passion I was tossed all over the bed, yearning to see the light of morning when I could see and talk with you. But when my half-dead body was lying exhausted by its labours on my little couch, I made this poem for you, you sweet thing, so you would understand my suffering from it. Now, you who are my eyes! Do not be too bold and be careful not to reject my prayer – otherwise Nemesis will demand a penalty from you. She is a vicious goddess: be careful not to offend her.

As stated above, the poem he sends to Licinius is, most likely, the following poem, a translation of Sappho 31. In negotiating an author like Sappho, who wrote in the Lesbian dialect, we can assume that some aid (and effort) would have been necessary, but none is mentioned, and all we have represented is Catullus, Calvus and a text. This is a poem that Catullus, half dead from the events of last night, tosses off in a state, we can assume, in which he is not fit for writing other forms of poetry – and, apparently, with no effort or assistance whatsoever.

Something similar occurs in Pliny the Younger's (61–c.113 CE) letter advising translation as a suitable exercise for a Roman senator who has retired to his country villa:

The most useful activity and one which many people suggest is to translate from Greek into Latin or from Latin into Greek. This form of exercise produces ownership and brilliance in language and by imitating the best writers you gain a similar ability for invention. And also, what has escaped someone who is only reading cannot flee the grasp of someone translating. In this way understanding and judgment is acquired. It doesn't cause any harm, after you have read through something sufficiently to keep its main argument in your mind, to write as if in competition with it, and then compare your efforts with the original and consider carefully where your version is better or worse. There will be great congratulations if you are sometimes better, and great shame if the original is always better. You can sometimes select a very well known passage and try to compete with it. This is bold, but not shameless, since it will be a private struggle. And yet we see that many men have gained much praise for themselves in these sorts of competitions and have overcome those they merely thought to pursue, provided that they did not give up hope. (*Epistles* 7.9.3–5)

As we see from Pliny's final lines, although translation is a nice way to spend time at your villa, his addressee, Fuscus, will have to return to Rome and perform his translations to other members of the Roman elite if he wants to gain glory and recognition of his skill as a translator. The performance of translations is represented as a social and oral activity, even if here the production of the translations is not (though we should assume that Fuscus probably had a Greek slave or two on his staff in his villa to help him out with his work). The creation and presentation of translations was a collaborative experience, and their presentation was part of the fabric of elite social and literary life.

Why the Romans elide Greek help in translation

Where have the Greeks gone? It is not as if the Romans elsewhere elide the collaborative nature of literary production; Pliny writes about inviting others over to help him to edit his work for publication on a number of occasions. Some erasures may have to do with the slave status of many Greeks who aided Romans: slaves were tools and their presence was usually not worthy of note, but that cannot explain all of them. And even as slaves, Greek tutors had a higher status than other slaves: they were trained, sometimes famous before their enslavement (Parthenius, for example, was famous as a poet before he was taken to Rome), and could usually look forward to being freed, sometimes very quickly. Some Romans also kept free Greeks on staff whom they would bring out at dinners to debate with: the Greek satirist Lucian (second century CE) pitied those who had taken positions in the houses of Romans who kept them around as status symbols and to bolster their reputations as members of the intelligentsia even though they knew nothing.²⁴

One answer may lie in the performative nature of Roman literary production and anxieties about showing oneself as in control of Greek texts, anxieties which were particularly high in performance (itself a fraught event under any circumstances). Roman literature was intended to be performed; as a first stage of production of many texts, authors recited their material to groups of friends; acting on their advice, vigorous editing took place.²⁵ Pieces were performed and re-performed as the process continued; final products were also recited, sometimes to large audiences who might be reluctant to come. Poets who were not good at performing poetry tried to find workarounds: Pliny, after discovering that he was not good at reciting his poetry, arranged to have one of his freedmen recite it, but wondered if he should stand behind him and mime out the words, something he indicates was quite common. He abandoned that plan as he was not particularly good at miming, not because it would have been awkward for his audience to watch him mimic the performer (*Epistles* 9.34). Roman literature was not published in our sense, but released (Small 1997, 40).²⁶

Cicero, oral translation and its marks on his work

I now return to Cicero and will work my way back to the final line of the *On the Best Type of Orator* via some of his other translations. Cicero's philosophical translations were in the form of dialogues, a replication of orality, as well as a gesture to Plato's dialogues. The interlocutors were always Romans and usually (though not always) Cicero and his friends: he rewrote *On the Republic*, an imitation of Plato's *Republic*, to feature himself and his circle as speakers rather than a previous generation of Romans at the urging of a friend (*Letters to his Brother Quintus* 3.5.1–2). The friend, Sallustius, had argued that it would give the text more authority for Cicero to speak in his own voice, as he was a man of consular rank and worth hearing. Elsewhere, Cicero is careful to assure his audience that even if he is reworking Greek philosophy, he speaks as Cicero, not as a mouthpiece for any Greek philosopher, no matter how famous. We see this in *On the Laws* (53–50 BCE), a Ciceronian dialogue which imitates Plato's *Laws*. There, Cicero's brother Quintus comments

that Cicero only seems to wish to imitate Plato stylistically and not literally translate him. Cicero replies:

I may wish it – who is able or ever will be able to imitate (*imitari*) him stylistically? For it is easy to literally translate (*interpretari*) thoughts; that I could do if I did not wish to be myself. For what effort is there in speaking (*dicere*) the same thoughts translated (*conversa*) in almost the same words? (2.17)

When Cicero was creating these translations, Latin did not have a philosophical vocabulary, and he and other translators had to forge their own, either by repurposing existing vocabulary or creating new Latin words. Translating Plato into Latin in any form that approached the literal would be a very difficult task. However, if anyone had the command over both languages to do that, it was Cicero; that was not what held him back. He did not translate literally because he wanted to be heard in his text, to speak (*dicere*) in his own voice. He even has Quintus answer by insisting that he would prefer Cicero to speak as Cicero, representing the (purported) desires of a Roman reader. To further highlight the issues of orality and speech in this passage, Cicero does not just speak about translating, but uses *interpretari*, the Latin verb that indicates oral translation.²⁷ The passage suggests that it would be easy for Cicero to act like an *interpretes*, an oral translator, but that he will not because that would be a disappointment for the Roman reader. The *interpretes* is a complex figure in Cicero's text (see McElduff 2009), but here he is both a straw man that stands in for all the wrong forms of translation *and* represents the many oral interpreters that existed in Rome.

All oral performances in Rome were carefully scrutinized and bad performances were mocked; this was true not just for rhetoric, but for other types of literary production.²⁸ How you performed and how you spoke marked you as the right or wrong type of Roman male,²⁹ and even in a written text Cicero needed to acknowledge that he knew what type of performance was expected from him and would deliver it in his own voice, not that of some Greek, even if the Greek was Plato. As Rome's greatest orator, Cicero was keenly aware of the importance of oral performance and speaking in his own voice; after all, his career as a politician and lawyer depended on his ability to manage his performances and to convince others using not just speech but gesture, movement and emotive appeals (such as bursting into tears; see, for example, his breakdown at *In Defense of Milo* 105). As a new man, the first in his family to hold high political office in Rome, the performance of his speeches, whether in the court, the Senate or the Forum, was critical to his career and reputation.

Both Cicero's political³⁰ and literary reputation were under threat during the period he produced *On the Best Type of Orator*. His oratory was under attack by a group of self-proclaimed Atticist orators (who included the Licinius Calvus mentioned in Catullus' poem above), who labelled Cicero an Asianist, which meant a speaker of what the Atticists saw as a florid, overly rhythmic, and unmanly style of oratory. The insults between Cicero and this group flew thick and fast and involved attacks on opponents' masculinity,³¹ as to speak the wrong type of oratory was to be the wrong type of Roman male, especially as the form of language that you used was considered to be embodied in your person and your character. Faced with these

attacks, Cicero produced a range of oratorical treatises which were intended to secure his oratorical legacy. *On the Best Type of Orator* was one of these, and aimed to reclaim for Cicero two of the Atticists' most important Greek models: Demosthenes and Aeschines. By providing himself as Demosthenes and Aeschines, or, rather, a Latin Demosthenes and Aeschines called up from the dead and speaking to a Roman audience, he would stop the Atticists from going back to these models and claim them for himself.

In animating Aeschines as he does in the final line of *On the Best Type of Orator*, Cicero was using a rhetorical technique, prosopopoeia, which he had previously used to devastating effect in the *Defence of Caelius* (56 BCE). In this technique, orators spoke to their audiences in another persona or even as an object. In the *Defence of Caelius* Cicero spoke in the persona of Appius Claudius Caecus, a famous ancestor of one of the prosecutors and of the aristocratic woman that Caelius (among other charges) was accused of trying to poison. The particular form of prosopopoeia that Cicero used in *On the Best Type of Orator*, however, is unparalleled in extant Roman oratory in that Cicero animated not the ghosts of Romans, but of Greeks. By translating Aeschines and Demosthenes and animating them for a Roman audience, Cicero was trying to claim them as his rhetorical ancestors and pull them away from the grasp of the Atticists, making Calvus and the Atticists illegitimate figures trying to lay illicit claim to this tradition.

To achieve this, Cicero emphasized that he would speak as Aeschines *himself* (*ipsum*), embodying the ancient Greek orator in his person as the Roman Atticists could not. As stated above, the *ipsum* is not necessary for understanding the meaning in Latin, but is there for emphasis, to stress the fact that this is the *real* Aeschines performing for the Roman reader. However, this was a risky manoeuvre and would only work if Cicero convinced his audience that these translations were so authentic that they were what Aeschines would speak if he spoke Latin. In other words, he must convince them that when he speaks as Aeschines they are hearing the Greek orator and not Cicero. To do this Cicero would have to erase himself from his own translation, making himself an invisible translator. But for an elite Roman translator becoming invisible was not a positive outcome: he should speak in his own voice, no matter whom he was translating. A Roman audience would not be impressed by Cicero subsuming himself into the role of Aeschines, no matter how pleasing or convincing the translation he produced. The problem would be particularly acute if Cicero were to actually perform the speeches, as he would appear to mouth the words of Greeks, a slavish aide to alien orators. In other words, to *speak* as a Greek in translation was not an acceptable proposition for Cicero, or indeed any elite Roman, just as it was not for any elite Roman in daily life, even though he³² was expected, paradoxically, to be able to speak Greek. In the case of *On the Best Type of Orator* and the mystery of the missing translations that were supposed to follow this preface, I would like to suggest that the unique situation of spoken Greek in Roman elite culture and the rules of speaking and performing Greek explains why Cicero never produced the promised translations. For those translations to work the way he wanted them to, he would have had to

break too many rules of Roman translation and risk erasing his own voice in the translated speeches.

Notes

1. See, for example, the innovative collection edited by Pym, Shlesinger, and Jettmarová (2003).
2. We know most about military interpreters, on which see Peretz (1996) and Kurz (1986). A range of ancient sources discuss different uses of interpreters, though not on a frequent or consistent basis. Some examples: on interpreters in the Senate, see Cicero, *On Divination* 2.131.6; on military and diplomatic interpreters, see Sallust, *Jugurthine War* 109.4; Julius Caesar, *Gallie War* 1.19, 1.46, 1.52; and Josephus, *Jewish War* 5.360–75, 6.96–8; on bad interpreters, see Ovid, *Letters from Pontus* 4.14.39–43. For further discussion (with more references) of the many roles that interpreters might play in Rome, see McElduff (2013, 24–30).
3. I am not talking about the oft-repeated canard that the Romans could or did not read silently, a myth long since put to rest, but rather the complex intersection between the spheres of orality, reading and writing, a subject too large to be more than touched on here. On reading in Rome, see especially Valette-Cagnac (1997); on writing as social performance and texts as embodiment of the author, see Habinek (1998, 103–121); for a wide range of perspectives on ancient literacies, see Johnson and Parker (2009).
4. So, for example, at *Epistles* 1.41–44 the Roman poet Horace refers to his audience and says he is ashamed to present his trifles in the recital hall. A critic then responds by insisting that Horace is keeping his poetry for Jupiter's (Augustus') ear, instead of that of the public. Tacitus discusses the influence of the audience in shaping contemporary oratory (*Dialogue On Oratory* 20); Juvenal talks about the misery of having patrons who would not pay for the cost of hiring a recital hall (*Satires* 7.39–47).
5. On the importance of oral performance in Catullus, see Skinner (1993); on oral elements in Catullus, see Clark (2008); on the language of social performance in Cicero and Catullus, see Krostenko (2001). Regarding reworked oratorical texts: Cicero's *In Defense of Milo* was a vastly revised version of his initial and unsuccessful speech; nearly all of his *Verrines* and *Philippics* were never given orally, circulating only in written form.
6. I should, however, point out that Roman translators also saw translation from Greek as a strategy to raise the status of Latin (see, for example, Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 2.5–6; Copeland [1991, 11–13]; and McElduff [2013, 101–105]).
7. *Sed de nobis satis. Aliquando enim Aeschinem ipsum Latine dicentem audiamus.*
8. This was a particular problem after his suppression of the Catilinarian conspiracy in 63 BCE. According to Seneca the Younger, it was not that he talked of this feat without reason, but without end (*On the Shortness of Life* 5.1).
9. I speak here of literary translations; translations of official documents into Greek, which were posted in the Greek East, were usually anonymous.
10. Other genres like lyric poetry were more problematic; Cicero said that even if he had two lifetimes, he would not have time to read lyric poetry (Seneca the Younger, *Letters* 49.5); he did not seem to regret this.
11. *Responsa* is the term used for replies by jurists and magistrates, to be distinguished from the *edicta* and the *consulta* of the Senate. The relevant *consulta* were translated into Greek and posted around the Greek East.
12. A Greek cloak: just as Romans were marked by wearing the toga, so Greeks were marked by the *pallium*.
13. On this passage, see Rochette (2011, 550) and Wallace-Hadrill (2011).
14. In particular, Valerius may be projecting backwards anxieties about the roles of Greek and Latin prevalent in the era of Tiberius.
15. See, for example, Suetonius, *Tiberius* 71. This was not an absolute rule, however, and exceptions could be made (Suetonius, *Claudius* 42; Cassius Dio 60.17.4; see further McElduff [2013, 30–32]).

16. Praetors were Roman officials, elected on a yearly basis. The praetorship was the second highest rank in the *cursus honorum*, the course of offices that Roman elites tried to complete by holding the office above this, the consulship. Most interpreters were not of this status; in this situation the importance of the situation and the status of the king required the use of someone of high rank.
17. This verb can be used as a translation verb (see, for example, Terence *Andria* 3; McElduff [2013, 89, 129]), so Horace may be suggesting that Lucilius engaged in translation.
18. As a result, when Brutus fled to Greece after the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE, one of the places he went to recruit officers for his army was Athens – Horace was recruited to fight for the Republican cause during this visit.
19. These were not tears of joy: Molon was crying because now the Greeks had nothing, as Cicero had stripped them of their pre-eminence in rhetoric. Valerius Maximus tells us that Molon was the first Greek to address the Senate without an interpreter, an honour granted to him because of his status as Cicero's teacher (2.2.3).
20. The poet Archias, defended by Cicero in *Defence of Archias* against charges of illegally claiming Roman citizenship, was one such Greek who came to Rome voluntarily and lived in a number of elite households; he was given Roman citizenship as a reward for his writings (in Greek) praising elite Romans.
21. Valette-Cagnac (2005) is an excellent discussion of precisely what type of Greek the Roman elite may have spoken. Horrocks (2010, 79–122) is a good introduction to the rise of *koiné* and its distribution throughout the Greek East and under the Roman Empire. We are not sure what ancient Greek actually sounded like or the precise sound difference between Attic and *koiné*, so we cannot be sure of just how different an elite Roman's Greek would have sounded to a contemporary Greek.
22. Cicero had a Greek draw one up for Posidonius' *On Duty* while he was getting ready to write his own *On Duties* (*Letters to Atticus* 2.6.1).
23. We do not know if our collection of Catullus' poetry is as Catullus arranged it or if it reflects the arrangement of a later editor or editors. Poem 50 is followed by Catullus' translation of Sappho 31; Catullus precedes another translation (poem 66) with a translation preface (poem 65; it is explicitly a preface to the following translation). Both 50 and 51 are also connected by the situation of the narrator and the language used by Catullus (see further Wray [2001, 98–99]; Clark [2008], 261–263, and McElduff [2013, 129–131] for further discussion on the connections between poems 50 and 51).
24. *On Paid Positions in Great Houses*. Greeks might also be kept as living aides-memoire. Calvisius Sabinus, a Roman with a notoriously bad memory, kept learned slaves because he could not remember any Greek poetry: one knew all of Homer; one all of Hesiod; another the nine canonical Greek lyric poets. He felt that their knowledge was automatically his (Seneca, *Epistles* 27.6–7).
25. For a complication of this model, see Parker (2011), who is more sceptical about the orality of Roman literary life.
26. The historian Tacitus talks of poets having to beg people to turn up to be members of their audience (*Dialogue on Oratory* 9), while Pliny speaks of audience members coming in late, slipping out early, and boldly walking out whenever they got bored (*Epistles* 1.13).
27. Like all Latin terms for translation, it is not exclusively used for that activity and can be used for other forms of interpretation, such as the interpretation of dreams, etc.
28. Even those of emperors. Suetonius talks of the difficulties the Emperor Claudius had when he performed, some of which were due to external issues over which he had no control, as when a bench collapsed under the weight of a fat man in the middle of one of his readings (Suetonius, *Claudius* 41).
29. On this, see especially Gleeson (1995).
30. Faced with the crisis in the Roman Republic brought about by Julius Caesar's total domination of the political scene after his defeat of Pompey the Great and the Senatorial cause in 49 BCE, Cicero turned to producing philosophical works which were intended to ensure that his vision of the ideal state was left as a legacy to future Romans. This occurred at the same time as he produced much of his oratorical theory.
31. Calvus called Cicero's oratory "loose and floppy" (*solutum et enervem*), while Brutus termed it "effeminate and wonky" (*fractum atque elumbem*; Tacitus, *Dialogue on Oratory*

- 18.5). In response, Cicero called Calvus “bloodless and dried out” (*exsanguem et aridum*) and Brutus “sluggish and disjointed” (*otiosum atque diiunctum*, *ibid.*).
32. Although many elite Roman women were familiar with and learned in Greek literature and Greek, there was no social expectation that they be so.

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